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FM AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1452

UNCLAS KATHMANDU 000142

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E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [KWMN](#) [PREL](#) [KPAO](#) [PHUM](#) [NP](#)
SUBJECT: EMBASSY KATHMANDU'S S/GWI PROJECT PROPOSALS

REF: SECSTATE 132094

The following are, in rank order, Embassy Kathmandu's proposals submitted to the Secretary's Office of Global Women's Issues Small Grants Initiative:

1. Reconciliation: Voices and Experiences of Conflict-Affected Women (Himalayan Human Rights Monitors - HimRights)

Background

The signing of the Comprehensive Peace Accord in November 2006 brought a formal end to the decade-long armed conflict between Maoist rebels and government forces, during which some 13,000 people lost their lives. Countless others suffered physical, emotional and psychological injuries. All segments of society were victimized, but the conflict took a disproportionate toll on poor and/or socially excluded members of society. One such vulnerable group was the women and girls caught between the warring parties. Some women joined the Maoists due to their political ideology and for perceived social justice; however, others were forcefully recruited for which they suffered physically and psychologically. The Maoists forced women to provide them with food and lodging, and state security forces imprisoned, tortured and killed them for it. Sexual abuse and rape was one of the favored tools of war. As Secretary Clinton has noted, the use of sexual violence is a "crime against humanity," and all those who abet such violence and permit impunity to continue "harm not only individuals, families, villages and regions, but shred the very fabric that weaves us together as human beings."

The social fabric of Nepal remains weakened because most of the women and girls who were raped or sexually abused do not want to speak about it for fear of losing dignity and respect. In Nepal, women's chastity and sexual faithfulness are of immense importance for family honor and reputation. In most cases, girls and women who are sexually abused or raped are viewed with contempt and blamed. As a result, there is a culture of silence amongst victimized women. Carrying these painful secrets seriously affects the women's well-being. However, these effects are poorly documented. Shame, self-contempt and hate may consume women and cause them to resort to violence themselves. In a recent workshop conducted by Himalayan Human Rights Monitors (HimRights), survivors stated that they wanted revenge and, in the wake of government inaction, wanted to take violent measures to address their needs.

A UN staffer told HimRights she had worked in many conflict-affected countries, but has never seen a situation comparable to the one in Nepal, where the silence about the conflict-affected, particularly women and girls who were sexually abused and raped, is deafening. It is absolutely critical that programs that support and give voice to victims of gender-based violence be implemented. An essential element would be the systematic recording of war-time acts of violence against women and children.

----- Project Summary -----

Women and girls were one of the hardest hit groups during the armed conflict; unfortunately, their needs have neither been highlighted nor addressed. Even though documentation of human rights violation against women has increased, violations against the conflict-affected remain ignored. This project would begin documenting the magnitude of gender-based violence cases that took place during the conflict. The aim is to give women a platform to be visible and heard, create the empathetic environment needed for reconciliation and collect the evidence necessary to force policy makers to take the issues and concerns of conflict-affected women seriously. Multiple activities will be undertaken over 14 months to achieve these goals, including compiling hundreds of case profiles, creating radio programming, organizing a national policy dialogue, and conducting media sensitivity training.

----- Project Description -----

Objectives:

- Highlight and mainstream the prevalence and magnitude of gender-based human rights violations;
- Support women victims of armed conflict;
- Create a platform for conflict-affected women to voice their issues and experiences;
- Hold stakeholders accountable for past human rights violations;
- Create an empathetic environment for women affected by the armed conflict;
- Promote the meaningful participation of conflict-affected women in the peace process; and
- Make conflict-affected women aware of transitional justice mechanisms at both the national and international level.

Activities:

- Documentation of case stories of women affected by armed conflict. Collect 300 profiles of women affected by armed conflict in three districts severely affected by the conflict (Kailali, Bardia, and Bara). There will be 60 in-depth case studies, focusing on the use of sexual abuse and rape, which will further illuminate the magnitude and impact of conflict on women. This data will be used to more effectively lobby and advocate with policymakers and civil society organizations for policies and programs that support conflict-affected women; and to ensure that well-intended policies and programs are effective. This information will be submitted to the National Human Rights Commission, UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction, and the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare to solicit support and action and to influence the draft National Plan of Action. This information could be used as evidence for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Process: Identification of the victims will take place during the first quarter, and will be based on existing HimRights Lifeline reports, recent research reports, information and data from relevant organizations and human rights network. A profile format will be prepared, and the field team will be given an orientation on how to document cases.

- Publish a graphic book that shares in an anonymous way the experiences of women survivors of sexual abuse during the armed conflict. This graphic book will be based on the realities and experiences of 60 women from the three districts selected for documentation and other conflict affected districts. The story told in the book will address the impact of conflict on women, as well as what justice, restitution, and reconciliation means for them and existing mechanisms. The graphic book will be a tool to voice these women's realities to a larger audience anonymously, so that victims are protected from potential humiliation and contempt

from society for being the victims of rape and other gender based violence. The process of making this book is also intended to be a healing experience for the survivors, build their self-image, and purge victims of a desire to take revenge. (Note. HimRights, with financial support from UNICEF, developed a similar book based on the experience of conflict-affected children, which was very well-received.)

Process: The graphic book process will take place between the 2nd and 4th quarters. As women will have many responsibilities, the project timing will be planned in consultation with the women. A stipend will be provided as most women must work for their sustenance.

Phase I (7 days, 50 participants): This pictorial book will be based on the individual stories of survivors woven into one story. They can share their stories in drawings, oral stories, poems, and songs. The sessions in this phase include drawing classes and seminars on the root causes of conflict; structural violence; victim and revenge cycles; importance of psycho-social counseling; individual experiences and its impact; and justice, restitution reconciliation for them. Selection criteria will be an inclusive process that takes geographic and ethnic diversity, as well as a diversity of stories related to the conflict into consideration.

Phase II (7 days 20 participants): Fine tune the story and work on the graphic book done during Phase 1. Women will be selected based upon their skill in illustration, dialogue, and story writing in a participatory process.

Phase III (7 days 8 participants): During this phase, the graphic book will be finalized, the story and illustrations will be edited and gaps in the story will be worked out.

- Develop a national radio program for women to share their experiences. Women's voices, realities and experiences will be recorded for a radio program. The stories told by the women will underscore the need to take immediate action on reparation and restitution. Furthermore, they will generate empathy for survivor of gender-based violence during the conflict. Radio is the most popular communications medium in Nepal, which would make the stories accessible even in remote areas.

Process: Compelling stories will be selected from the 300 profiles documented (Activity 1) and the comic book process (Activity 2), and radio programs will be produced based on them. Information on the national and international transitional justice mechanisms will be incorporated into the content of the program as well.

- Organize an exhibition of artwork, poetry, stories created by women survivors. The four-day exhibition, which would coincide with either International Women's Day or International Human Rights Day, is intended to highlight violence during the armed conflict and generate empathy for survivors.

- Hold a national-level policy dialogue. The two-day National Policy Dialogue (NPD) will bring together women affected by conflict with officials from key policymakers. This will be a platform for survivors of gender-based violence to interact with policy makers at the highest level. The dialogue will focus on the issues, problems, concerns, and realities of women affected by conflict, and commitments with respect to policies, programs, and the National Plan of Action will be sought from the relevant ministries. Attendees will include participants from 5 regions from activities 1, 2, and 3. Key stakeholders will be invited to participate.

Process: The first day will be orientation for the participants to share their issues and concerns and how to raise them systematically and effectively. In the second day participants will raise their issues and concerns and dialogue with the representatives of the Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction; the Ministry of Women, Children and

Social Welfare; the Ministry of Law; the Ministry of Health; the Ministry of Finance; National Women's Commission; National Human Rights Commission; National Planning Commission; Constituent Assembly members/Parliamentarians, and TRC members. The event will take place during the 4th quarter.

- Media training to sensitize journalists. Thirty journalists will be brought together for training to ensure gender-sensitive reporting especially regarding gender-based violence during the conflict. The training will examine the root causes of the conflict, what women faced during the conflict, and how to report stories sensitively. The training will also emphasize the importance of the media in creating an empathetic environment for victims of gender-based violence and ensuring that victims have access to justice.

Process: The three-day training will take place between the second and third quarters.

Monitoring & Evaluation

Local offices will conduct periodic visits and central offices will visit bi-annually. Successful compensation cases and changes in policies will be documented. An external evaluator will do the social audit. Two measures will be used to assess the program's effectiveness. First, the direct impact of programs for survivors will be assessed. Among survivors, we hope to see the building of friendship and trust, reduction in the need for revenge, increased forgiveness, smoother reintegration, transition beyond victimhood, healed physical injuries, positive self-image and increased confidence. Second, we will assess the degree to which the stories of conflict-affected women create an empathetic environment regarding gender-based violence, more generally, and legal and policy reform that is sensitive to gender-based violence.

Budget

Documentation at District Level
\$11,729.73

Graphic Book on voices and experience of women in armed conflict
\$ 35,154.05

Radio Program
\$ 11,486.49

National Policy Dialogue
\$ 4,209.42

Exhibition artwork
\$ 1,716.22

Follow Up, Monitoring and Evaluation
\$ 4,432.43

Administration
\$ 26,297.30

Overhead Cost
\$ 4,751.28

Total
\$ 99,776.96

(See note at end of cable.)

HimRights Organizational Profile

Mission Statement: To promote justice, equity, and social inclusion to ensure the basic human rights of marginalized people.

History of the Organization: Himalayan Human Rights Monitors (HimRights) is a non-governmental, non-partisan, and non-profit organization committed to defending the rights of poor, marginalized and socially excluded communities and individuals, with a special focus on women, children and youth. HimRights works in affiliation with major national and international human rights institutions, pursuing a three-fold approach of (1) monitoring and reporting; (2) responding to human rights violations; and (3) advocating and training for policy change, influence, awareness raising, and capacity improvement to cope with and respond to changing human rights dynamics in Nepal. HimRights was informally formed in the mid-1990s and was officially registered in 1999. The current team consists of lawyers, teachers, journalists, anthropologists, conflict and development specialists, social workers and human rights activists. Together, these individuals bring decades of individual and collective professional experience to HimRights, enabling HimRights to work effectively in the areas of human rights, trafficking, good governance, conflict mitigation, reconciliation, and peace building.

Organizational Capacity: HimRights has capable and committed human resources from various disciplines. Their team has a conflict transformation and peace building expert, human rights defenders, anthropologists, sociologists, journalists (electronic/print), social mobilizers, trainers, and lawyers. HimRights has offices in 7 districts (Makawanpur, Bara, Ratahat, Parsa, Banke, Sarlahi and Saptari), a central office in Kathmandu with a full-time staff of 36 people, 738 members of Surveillance Groups (Makawanpur and Bara) and Village Mediation Groups (Banke) at the village level, 12 Focal Points/part time staffs in Dhankuta, Saptari, Dhanusha, Kavre, Sindhupalchok, Maygdi, Kapivastu, Rolpa, Dang, Kailalia, Achham and Mugu. Well-trained, locally inclusive staffs and field monitors for documentation of human rights violation are also part of the HimRights team. Moreover, HimRights has maintained a good network and coordination with concerned agencies during and after the armed conflict.

HimRights affiliated networks: Partnerships for Protecting Children in Armed Conflict; National Working Committee on Disappearances; Human Rights Treaty Monitoring Coordination Committee; Human Rights Alliance; NGO Federation; Alliance Against Trafficking of Women in Nepal; Beyond Beijing Committee; 1612 Task Force Monitoring & Reporting Mechanism; South Asia Women's Watch; and Asia Pacific Women's Watch.

Programming Experience: HimRights has successfully implemented a range of community and national-based programs to advance human rights, gender justice, women's empowerment, child rights, campaign for peace, genuine and participatory democracy, and people-centered development. As such, the HimRights team is confident in its capacity to implement the proposed project in a way that is fiscally responsible, educational for key stakeholders and the general population, and empowering for the women that are involved in the project.

12. Combating Gender-Based Violence, Strengthening Human Rights Protections (Utsaha Nepal)

----- Background -----

Human trafficking and gender-based violence (GBV) are serious, widespread problems in Nepal, the magnitude of which is increasing. It is estimated 10,000 to 12,000 women and girls are trafficked every year to India and Gulf countries for commercial sexual exploitation. Thousands of others are trafficked domestically each year for the same purpose. Among the many deleterious effects of this trafficking is exposure to HIV/AIDS. Many people point to the high level of GBV in Nepal as the chief factor behind the recent emergence of suicide as the leading cause of death of women 15 to 49. The vulnerability of women and girls is fueled by

gender discrimination and a lack of awareness, economic opportunities and livelihood skills.

----- Project Summary -----

This project aims to reduce gender-based violence (GBV), particularly human trafficking, and strengthen human rights protections for women and girls, while creating economic opportunities that will reduce their vulnerability to GBV. It will focus on six trafficking-prone districts where there is a high prevalence of HIV/AIDS. The project will be carried out by Utsaha Nepal, a non-governmental organization whose membership comprises women who are trafficking survivors and/or HIV-positive.

----- Project Description -----

This project, which will target the most at-risk populations, has two inter-dependent components. The first is aimed at reducing GBV, particularly trafficking, and the second will focus on strengthening human rights protections for women and girls. Activities include:

- Increasing public awareness about both gender-based discrimination and violence and the existing legal protections against them. (Note: In 2009, the Government of Nepal enacted a comprehensive domestic violence law and developed a national action plan for Year Against Gender-Based Violence, 2010.) This will be done through street dramas and the publication and distribution of pamphlets, posters and other material.
- Providing counseling services for women and children affected by GBV. Trained counselors will be hired, and their services will be linked to referral services for possible legal prosecutions.
- Conducting health camps, in partnership with other organizations, with an emphasis on HIV-screening.
- Conducting leadership training for women. Resource persons from various backgrounds will be contacted to provide leadership and capacity-building training to the target population.

The second component aims to provide livelihood skills and economic opportunities to women and girls whose impoverishment makes them vulnerable to GBV. Increased economic opportunity builds self-esteem, which in turn leads women and girls to advocate for wider rights. Activities include:

- Conducting life-skill training programs linked to micro-financing. The micro-credit loans will ensure that learned skills are transformed into sustainable entrepreneurship.

These activities will be carried out over 18 months in six trafficking-prone districts that also have a high HIV infection rate: Nuwakot, Rasuwa, Sindhupalchowk, Dhading, Kavrepalanchowk, and Chitwan.

----- Performance Measures of Desired Outcomes -----

Reducing GBV, strengthening human rights protections of women and children, and creating greater economic opportunities are outcomes that are not immediately perceptible, and as such makes it difficult to establish meaningful performance measures.

----- Budget -----

The total budget for this project is \$54,198. (See note at end of cable.)

Utsaha Nepal Organizational Profile

Utsaha Nepal was established in 2008 with the broad mission of combating human trafficking, safeguarding women's rights through empowerment, and liberating HIV/AIDS survivors from social stigma and discrimination. Membership of the Kathmandu-based group comprises women who are trafficking survivors and/or HIV-positive. Their background will facilitate connection with the project's target population. Utsaha Nepal was set up with support and guidance from Maiti Nepal, the largest and most successful anti-trafficking organization in Nepal. As a nascent organization, it is still building its technical and management capacity. Maiti Nepal, which has successfully executed a number of USG-funded programs, has pledged support for this project.

Grant Management

Post's Economic Officer, whose portfolio includes human trafficking and gender-based violence, will manage these two grants in close cooperation with USAID's subject experts. The EO will also work with USAID's Office of Programs and Projects Development to ensure that these projects, if funded, complement, wherever possible, other USG-funded projects.

Note: Post will forward detailed budgets for both projects via e-mail.
CAMP